

Appendix D

Public Involvement



The Bear Lake Regional Commission has recently completed a draft of the Bear Lake County Fire Plan. The purpose of the plan is to inventory the wildland fire danger for the county and develop mitigation to reduce the risks associated with high risk areas. To fulfill the goals and objectives of the plan, all areas within the county excluding incorporated communities were inventoried for fire hazards. The inventory includes: a structural assessment, an environmental assessment and a community assessment. Mitigation strategies based on the inventory have been developed with help from the Wildland Fire Group and a proposed list of actions and implementation strategy are included.

This plan was developed with assistance from the Bureau of Land Management and Bear Lake County Wildland Fire Group which is composed of Federal, State and Local Fire Personnel and other local leaders. The public is invited and encouraged to read the plan and provide any comments or suggestions that may be of benefit to the county in preventing and controlling wildfires. The comment period will be open until the end of September and copies of the Fire Plan can be found at the following locations:

- Bear Lake County Courthouse
- Montpelier City Office
- Bear Lake County Library
- Paris City Library
- Bear Lake Regional Commission



The Bear Lake Regional Commission has recently completed a draft Fire Assessment and Mitigation Plan for Bear Lake County. This fire assessment is part of the “communities-risk” program sponsored by the Bureau of Land Management. An initial “high-risk” fire assessment was completed in 2003 by Northwind Inc. for the west side of the county. Information from that plan has been incorporated into this plan for a comprehensive assessment of fire hazards county wide.

Elements assessed during plan development include: Structural fire hazards, natural fire hazards and community profile. Structural hazards that were assessed included: Construction materials, roof composition, building lot density and other factors related to home construction and surroundings relative to fire hazards. Natural hazards assessed included: vegetation type, density, slope, aspect. Assessment of the community profile included information regarding the capacity of the volunteer fire department and local emergency operations group as well as community attitudes and perceptions about wildland fires. Further assessments have been provided for lands administered by the USDA Forest Service.

Through information provided by the assessments of the county, public input and recommendations from the wildland fire group, a mitigation strategy has been developed for the county. Improvements suggested as mitigation include: improved infrastructure, upgrading of existing equipment and acquisition of additional equipment, an information, education and outreach program targeting recreational homeowners and full time residents.

Much of the mitigation for the county is focused on the western side of the county between Bear Lake and the Forest Service Boundary. This side received the greatest amount of consideration because of the fire danger posed by existing conditions. Lack of water, accessibility, population, fuels and infrastructure all contributed to the focus on the west side of the county. A copy of the plan will be available to the public at the following locations: Bear Lake Regional Commission, Bear Lake County Courthouse, Montpelier City Hall, Montpelier Library, Paris Library. Comments on the proposed plan are welcome and encouraged and a comment form will be provided at each location.

News Hammin 08/04/04

Fire assessment and mitigation draft plan recently announced

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